

WE CLAIM:

1. A device for automated composite lay-up, comprising:
 - a tool having an axis of rotation and an outside mold surface inside of a mandrel; and
 - a circular ring surrounding said tool and said mandrel and
 - 5 concentric with said axis of rotation wherein said tool is rotated about said axis of rotation and composite material is delivered directly to said outside mold surface inside of said mandrel;
 - a gantry beam disposed to access the inside of said mandrel; and
 - a plurality of material delivery heads supported by said gantry
 - 10 beam, wherein:
 - said gantry beam provides for movement of said plurality of material delivery heads relative to the outside mold surface; and
 - at least one of said plurality of material delivery heads has an individually adjustable position relative to the outside mold surface.
2. The device of claim 1, further comprising:
 - a bearing that contacts said circular ring and supports rotation of said mandrel about said axis of rotation; and
 - a bearing cradle that holds said bearing and supports the weight
 - 5 of said mandrel.
3. The device of claim 1, further comprising:
 - a tail stock wherein said gantry beam is supported at one end by said tail stock.
4. The device of claim 1, further comprising:
 - a connecting mechanism connecting at least one of said plurality of material delivery heads to said gantry beam and providing axial motion of

said at least one material delivery head along said gantry beam.

5. The device of claim 1, further comprising:
an arm mechanism connecting at least one of said plurality of material delivery heads to a gantry beam and providing motion of said at least one material delivery head relative to said outside mold surface of said mandrel.
6. The device of claim 1, wherein said gantry beam is supported as a cantilever beam.
7. The device of claim 1, wherein said gantry beam is supported as a cantilever beam using rollers so that said gantry beam is moveable relative to said tool.
8. The device of claim 7, further comprising a tail stock wherein:
said gantry beam is supported at one end by said tail stock; and
said tail stock is moveable with said gantry beam, providing support for said plurality of material delivery heads.

9. A device for automated composite lay-up, comprising:
a tool including a mandrel, wherein said mandrel has an interior
mandrel surface that conforms to an outside mold line of a part;;
at least one circular ring attached to said tool wherein said circular
5 ring surrounds said tool and said mandrel; and
a bearing that contacts said circular ring wherein said circular ring
rotates supported by said bearing so that said tool and said mandrel rotate
concentrically with said circular ring about an axis of rotation passing through
the center of said circular ring;
10 a gantry beam disposed to access the inside of said mandrel; and
a plurality of material delivery heads supported by said gantry
beam, wherein:
said gantry beam provides for movement of said plurality of
material delivery heads relative to said interior mandrel surface; and
15 at least one of said plurality of material delivery heads has
an individually adjustable position relative to said interior mandrel surface.

10. The device of claim 9 wherein said plurality of material delivery
heads deliver composite material directly to said outside mold line on said
interior mandrel surface.

11. The device of claim 9, further comprising:
a bearing cradle that holds said bearing and supports the weight
of said tool.

12. The device of claim 10 wherein said plurality of material delivery
heads deliver composite material simultaneously at said interior mandrel
surface.

13. The device of claim 9, further comprising:
a connecting mechanism connecting at least one of said plurality
of material delivery heads to said gantry beam, wherein:
said connecting mechanism provides axial motion of said at
5 least one material delivery head relative to said interior mandrel surface.

14. The device of claim 9, further comprising:
an arm mechanism connecting at least one of said plurality of
material delivery heads to said gantry beam, wherein:
said arm mechanism provides motion of said at least one
5 material delivery head relative to said interior mandrel surface in a direction
normal to said interior mandrel surface; and
said arm mechanism provides rotation of said at least one
material delivery head relative to said interior mandrel surface about an axis
normal to said interior mandrel surface.

15. A device for automated composite lay-up, comprising:
a tool including a mandrel and a circular ring having a center,
wherein:
said mandrel has an interior mandrel surface that conforms
5 to an outside mold line of a part;
said circular ring surrounds said mandrel and is attached to
said mandrel; and
a bearing cradle including a plurality of bearings wherein:
at least one bearing of said plurality of bearings contacts
10 said circular ring;
said bearing cradle supports the weight of said tool through
said plurality of bearings;
said circular ring rotates supported by said bearing so that
said mandrel rotates concentrically with said circular ring about an axis of

- 15 rotation passing through the center of said circular ring;
a gantry beam disposed to access the inside of said mandrel; and
a plurality of material delivery heads supported inside said
mandrel by said gantry beam, wherein:
said gantry beam provides for movement of said plurality of
20 material delivery heads relative to said interior mandrel surface; and
at least one of said plurality of material delivery heads has
an individually adjustable position relative to said interior mandrel surface.
16. The device of claim 15 wherein:
said gantry beam is cantilever supported; and
said gantry beam is moves axially relative to said tool.
17. The device of claim 15, further comprising:
a connecting mechanism connecting a material delivery head of
said plurality of material delivery heads to said gantry beam, wherein:
said connecting mechanism provides axial motion of said
5 material delivery head relative to said interior mandrel surface;
said connecting mechanism provides motion of said
material delivery head relative to said interior mandrel surface in a direction
normal to said interior mandrel surface; and
said connecting mechanism provides rotation of said
10 material delivery head relative to said interior mandrel surface about an axis
normal to said interior mandrel surface.
18. The device of claim 15, further comprising:
an arm mechanism connecting a material delivery head of said
plurality of material delivery heads to said gantry beam, wherein:
said arm mechanism provides axial motion of said material
5 delivery head relative to said interior mandrel surface

said arm mechanism provides motion of said material delivery head relative to said interior mandrel surface in a direction normal to said interior mandrel surface; and

said arm mechanism provides rotation of said material delivery head relative to said interior mandrel surface about an axis normal to said interior mandrel surface;

19. The device of claim 15 wherein said bearing cradle is moveable.

20. The device of claim 15, further comprising a tail stock wherein:

said gantry beam is supported by said tail stock during operation of said plurality of material delivery heads; and

said tail stock moves with said gantry beam during operation of said plurality of material delivery heads.

21. The device of claim 15 wherein:

said plurality of material delivery heads deliver composite material from inside said interior mandrel surface; and

said plurality of material delivery heads deliver composite material simultaneously.

22. An aircraft part manufacturing device for automated composite lay up, comprising:

a tool including a mandrel and a circular ring having a center, wherein:

5 said mandrel has an interior mandrel surface that conforms to an outside mold line of a part;

 said circular ring surrounds said mandrel and is attached to said mandrel;

 a bearing cradle including a plurality of bearings wherein:

10 at least one bearing of said plurality of bearings contacts said circular ring;

 said bearing cradle supports the weight of said tool through said plurality of bearings;

 said circular ring rotates supported by said bearing so that
15 said mandrel rotates concentrically with said circular ring about an axis of rotation passing through the center of said circular ring;

 said bearing cradle is moveable;

 a plurality of material delivery heads that deliver composite material directly to said outside mold line on said interior mandrel surface;

20 a gantry beam that is cantilever supported, wherein:

 said gantry beam is moveable relative to said tool; and

 said gantry beam supports said plurality of material delivery heads inside said interior mandrel surface of said mandrel; and

 a connecting mechanism connecting at least one of said plurality
25 of material delivery heads to said gantry beam, wherein:

 said connecting mechanism provides axial motion of said at least one material delivery head relative to said interior mandrel surface;

 said connecting mechanism provides motion of said at least one material delivery head relative to said interior mandrel surface in a direction
30 normal to said interior mandrel surface;

said connecting mechanism provides rotation of said at least one material delivery head relative to said interior mandrel surface about an axis normal to said interior mandrel surface.

23. An aircraft part manufacturing device for automated composite lay up, comprising:

means for rotating a mandrel about an axis of rotation wherein said mandrel has an outside mold surface on the inside of said mandrel;

5 means for supporting a plurality of material delivery heads inside said mandrel and simultaneously delivering composite material from said plurality of material delivery heads at said outside mold surface.

24. The device of claim 23 wherein said means for rotating said mandrel further comprises means for supporting said mandrel on a bearing in contact with a circular ring surrounding said mandrel.

25. The device of claim 23 wherein said means for supporting a plurality of material delivery heads further comprises:

means for supporting said plurality of material delivery heads from a gantry beam; and

5 means for providing axial motion of said plurality of material delivery heads.

26. The device of claim 23 wherein said means for supporting a plurality of material delivery heads further comprises:

means for providing motion of at least one of said plurality of material delivery heads relative to said outside mold surface in a direction normal to said outside mold surface; and

5 means for providing rotation of said at least one material delivery head relative to said outside mold surface about an axis normal to said outside

mold surface.

27. A method for automated composite lay up on an interior mandrel surface of a tool having an axis of rotation, comprising steps of:

rotating a mandrel about the axis of rotation wherein said mandrel has an outside mold surface on the inside of said mandrel;

5 supporting a plurality of material delivery heads interior to said outside mold surface; and

placing a composite fiber material inside said mandrel onto said outside mold surface simultaneously from said plurality of material delivery heads.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein said rotating step further comprises supporting said mandrel on a bearing in contact with a circular ring surrounding said mandrel.

29. The method of claim 27 wherein said rotating step further comprises:

supporting said mandrel on a bearing in contact with a circular ring surrounding said mandrel; and

5 supporting said bearing in a bearing cradle so that said bearing cradle supports the weight of said mandrel, the tool, and said circular ring.

30. The method of claim 27 wherein said supporting step further comprises:

supporting said plurality of material delivery heads from a gantry beam; and

5 providing axial motion of said plurality of material delivery heads.

31. The method of claim 27 wherein said supporting step further comprises:

providing motion of at least one of said plurality of material delivery heads relative to said outside mold surface in a direction normal to said
5 outside mold surface; and

providing rotation of said at least one material delivery head relative to said outside mold surface about an axis normal to said outside mold surface.

32. The method of claim 27 wherein said supporting step further comprises:

supporting said plurality of material delivery heads from a gantry beam; and

5 supporting at least one end of said gantry beam using a tail stock.